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The Reinicker Lectures for 1906

THE PLACE AND FUNCTION
OF THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
IN THE CHURCH



By the
Rt. Rev. William Paret, D.D.



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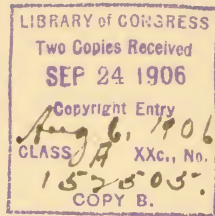
The Place and Function
of the
Sunday School in the Church

By the
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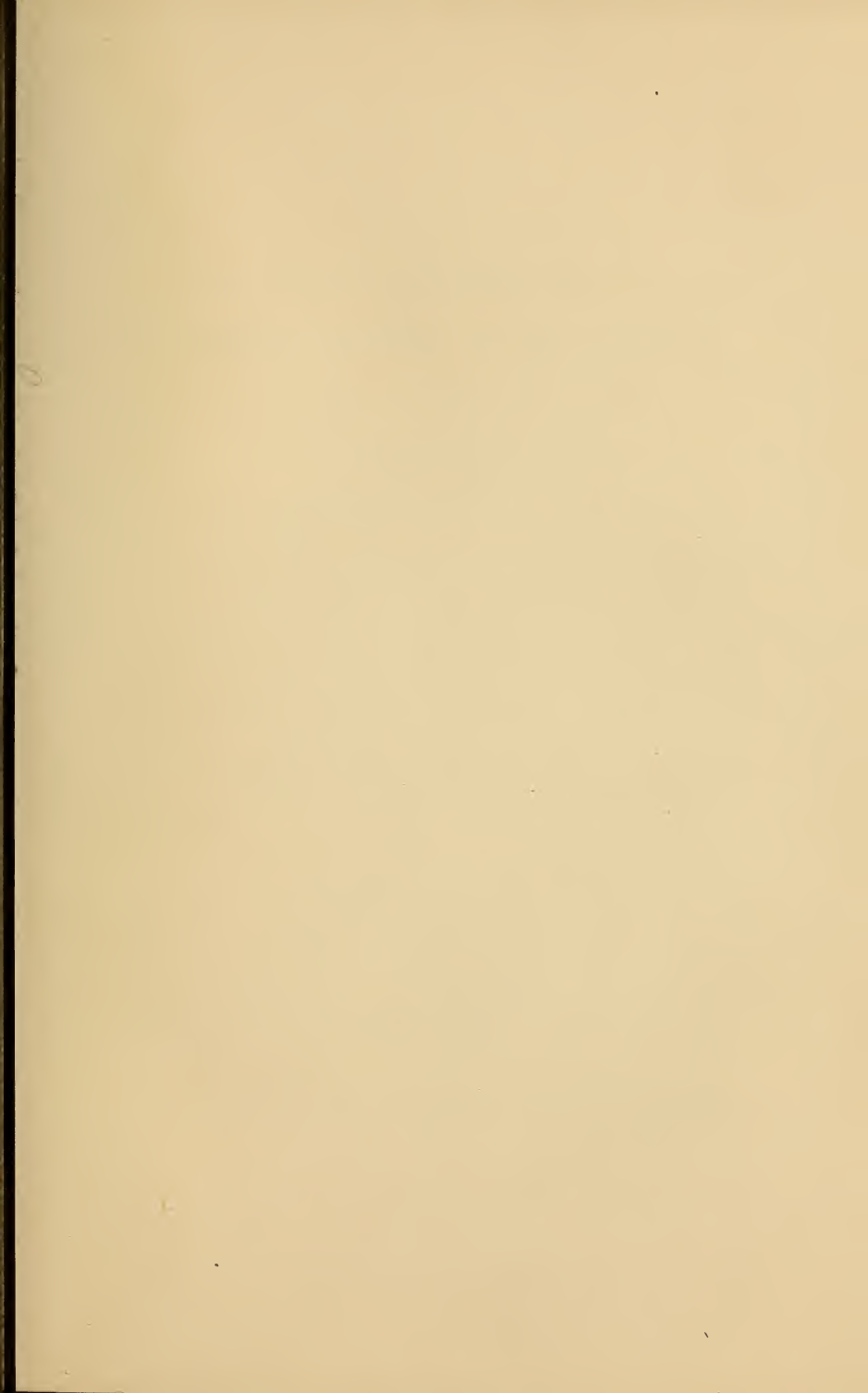
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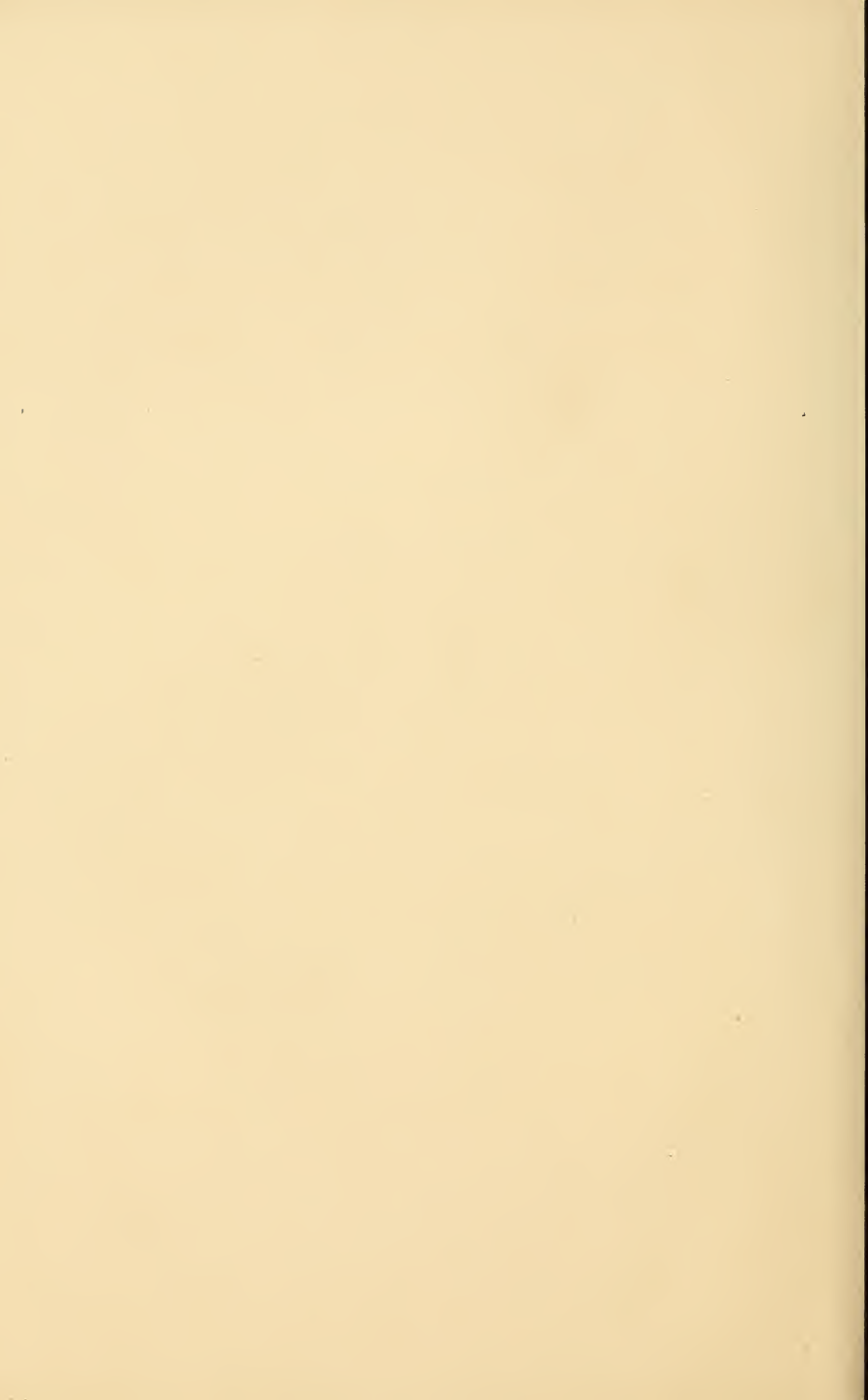
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The Place and Function of the Sunday School in the Church

LECTURE I

It is a helpful thing for me that those who honored me with the request that I should prepare and give the Reinicker Lectures, suggested, in doing so, a subject which I was very glad to accept. It is "The Place and Function of the Sunday School in the Church," and the simple naming of that subject brings us face to face with the greater subject on which it rests, the duty and relation of the Church to children. I fear that in the Church, as we know it to-day, we are losing, if we have not already lost, our grandest opportunities for the training and instruction of those who are to be the Church in the coming generation. I blame myself; I blame our theological seminaries; I blame our general idea of theological education and of candidates for Holy Orders, that so little attention is given to training

6 The Place and Function of the

those who are to be pastors, in the details of practical pastoral work and method for the young.

Bear with me then, if I have first of all in my thoughts now those among you who are preparing for the sacred ministry. I want to help them to feel their own awful personal responsibility.

When our Lord re-admitted St. Peter to the pastoral office which, by his sinful denial, had been forfeited, the first command, before He said to him, "Feed My sheep," was "Feed My lambs." Our Lord never used words carelessly, and we may be sure that there was divine purpose, not only in that distinction of words, but in the order in which He chose to use them. The lambs of His flock were first in His thought as He was speaking of pastoral duty. And you know how high a place His ministries and blessings to children filled in His personal work on earth; how gladly He received them; how lovingly and closely He gathered them in His arms; how He rebuked those who would have hindered; how He made them the very ideal for fitness for heaven and for God's presence. More and more the Church seems to be losing the proportions of pastoral work, as He presented them.

The children do not hold the place in the Church's loving care which they held in His. In almost all our parishes, in our organizations, in our services, in our preaching, in our use of Sundays, in our methods of parochial work, the older ones, the grown people, occupy almost all the thought, the time, the pastoral anxiety, and interest. The children do not come to Church. They are not expected. Place is not provided for them. If any do come, they are often made to feel that they are in the way; that the service is for their elders, and they are there only by toleration. The sermons are far over their heads, and not meant for them; written without thought of them. If there is a Sunday-school room, very often little pains are taken to make it inviting and beautiful. Little life and care are put in its prayers and hymns. It goes on in a half careless way, with no strong, inspiring leader, each teacher according to his or her wisdom or unwisdom, left to pursue his or her own individual method. It wakes no enthusiasm in the children. It has no unity, no singleness of purpose or method. Nay, worse, I have reason to know that some of the clergy have come to treat the Sun-

8 The Place and Function of the

day-school almost as an irksome instance of their professional duty, which they must have, because it is expected, but which they are glad to get through as quickly and easily as possible, that their strength and earnestness may be saved for what they count the more important services, in which all richness and beauty, and all the power of music, and the best efforts of the pastor's intellect are devoted to interesting, pleasing, and, perhaps, instructing those who, as older persons and contributors, are counted as of more importance than the children. It is a sad picture. There are some grand instances of nobler and better things. But, taking the average of city and country churches, I do not think I have exaggerated.

Let me, then, beg of you especially, who are preparing for a place in that blessed partnership with Christ, let me beg you, at the peril of your own souls, neglect not the little ones. Give them large part, very large, in your thoughts, in your prayers, in your pastoral visiting and personal intercourse, in your time, in your sermons, in your Sundays, and in the distribution of the hours of service.

Now, the Sunday-school is one of the methods

and helps for this pastoral care of children. But it is not the only one, nor can it be fully helpful if separated from the others. It was not the original method. There were no Sunday-schools in the Jewish Church, as God ordered it. There were no Sunday-schools in the early Christian Church, as ordered by the inspired apostles. In the second or third generation after them, there did grow up an order of catechists, who taught in catechetical schools. But these were nothing like our Sunday-schools—first, because they were not held on Sundays; and secondly, because they were not for children, but only for the instruction of adult persons coming out of heathenism, needing the teaching in Christian truth, which was required before they could be baptized. The Sunday-school, as we know it, had its beginning only one hundred and twenty-five years ago, when, in the city of Gloucester, in England, Robert Raikes, a printer, tried to meet a very great need. Very large numbers of young children came in from the country to work in the factories. And finding them left to themselves, without home influence or parental oversight and teaching, and growing up in immorality and

10 The Place and Function of the

ignorance of Christian truth, he, with the help of two or three others, began to gather some of them on Sundays, to teach them to read and write, and to give them the simplest elements of Christian knowledge. Out of this very simple beginning has grown the present immense Sunday-school work, but with some serious changes. With Raikes, its first purpose was not to give religious teaching, but to give, in the alphabet and reading, the first elements of ordinary secular knowledge to those too poor, or too closely at work, to be able to attend the week-day schools. It was a purely charitable system, meant only for the very poor. Now, it is exclusively for the religious teaching—for the rich quite as much as for the poor—and too largely used to relieve parents from their parental responsibility and duty.

The divine ideal was parental teaching and training. The father was the teacher of his household. Abraham commanded his children after him, so that they kept the way of the Lord. God said to each parent, concerning the words of His law, "Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." And grandly was that law of tradition kept. Even in their

long years of captivity in Egypt and in Babylon, where public worship was not possible, the knowledge of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the grand event of God's dealing with them was kept alive. And grandly is that household tradition kept sacred by the Hebrews of to-day. I am very sure there is no community of Christians, where children are so carefully trained in pious habits and knowledge in their home life, as among the Jews.

There were, indeed, just before and during the time of our Lord's life on earth, schools connected with the synagogue and taught by some of their officers; and in them, besides the teaching of the letters and reading, the important parts of the law of God were explained, and the scholars were required to commit them to memory. But they were not like Sunday-schools. They were day schools. The religious element entered so largely not to distinguish them from other kinds of teaching, as our Sunday-schools are distinguished from our week-day schools, but because the religious element held so large a place in the daily life of every household. They were more like what the Church of England day schools were for the past four or five generations,

12 The Place and Function of the

where the pastor or some one authorized by him had free access and regular duty in seeing that the school life and training, instead of having God left out, as they are leaving Him out in France, and excluding even His name from their school books, should have the religious life and influence in it ; as not something to be kept for a separate time and place, but as incorporated with the daily life and thought.

Unhappily, the conditions of our times and our people, with the diversities and jealousies of religious sects and teaching, seem, in the judgment of many, to have made the exclusion of religion from our public schools a necessity. And the children are being practically taught that religion is not a thing for week-day life, but only for Sundays. Alas, that with Christians, the devout parental diligence in home life so rarely supplies that want, as it is done in almost every Jewish household.

Again, in the early days of the Christian Church, there were no Sunday-schools. The New Testament gives no place nor suggestion for them. The family training was the ideal. The parents were commanded to "bring up their children in the nur-

ture and admonition of the Lord." And the happy result is instanced in the case of Timothy, whose knowledge of the Scriptures St. Paul dates back to childhood, and traces to the holy teaching and influence of his mother and grandmother. (And yet, they were the Old Testament Scriptures only which he knew so well; and those two devout women, Jewesses, in their early life, were carrying on into their Christian relations the holy habits of their former household life.)

But though the Sunday-school, as we know it, can be traced back only one hundred and twenty-five years, and though the early catechizings were for adult persons only, it should not be assumed that during the intervening centuries the religious training of children had been neglected. On the contrary, very great attention was given to it; nor is it true that such attention began with the Reformation in England, and in Germany. There are many important points, both in doctrine and in worship, in which we are sure that the Roman was then in error and is in error still. And it was the greatness of those errors which led to and justified the Reformation. All the more carefully and willingly

14 The Place and Function of the

should we give credit for the good things which that Church, amidst its errors, still held fast. And conspicuous among those good things was its loving diligence in caring for children's souls : conspicuous then, and conspicuous now, by their increasing diligence, by the money they expend on their schools, by the number of well-trained persons employed in the work, and by the fulness and exactness of their catechetical instruction, in which they now do much more by their week-day parish schools than it would be possible to do on Sundays only. Before the Council of Trent, it was counted as an essential part of priestly duties, and Bishops so urged it upon their clergy. It had not, until that time, taken such definite form in catechetical manuals, and in prescribed methods, but was left rather to individual pastoral diligence. More than one hundred years before the Council of Trent, the famous Gerson, Archbishop and Cardinal and Chancellor of the great university of Paris, published a treatise addressed to the clergy, on the importance of faithfulness in this duty. In one of the decrees of that Council, it is commanded that " The Bishops shall take care that, at least on the Lord's Day and

other festivals, the children in every parish be diligently taught the rudiments of the faith and obedience towards God and their parents, by those whom it concerns; and, if need be, they shall constrain them even by ecclesiastical censures, any privileges and customs notwithstanding."

Immediately, there was throughout the Roman Church a very great increase in systematic diligence. A great number of Bishops in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, at once issued minute instructions and forms. There was no generally authoritative catechism like ours in the Prayer Book, but each Diocese had its own method, and many of the Bishops led by their own diligent personal example. Even more than one hundred years before, Gerson, before mentioned as Archbishop, Cardinal and Chancellor, himself catechized the children regularly at St. Paul's church, in Lyons, and gave up his later years entirely to that work. The great and good Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in like manner catechized personally. The famous Bellarmin gathered the children in his cathedral for his own personal instruction.

St. Francis de Sales did the same. A witness said :

16 The Place and Function of the

“ I had the honor of being present at his blessed catechizing. Never have I seen such a sight. The good father, on a seat raised by five steps, was surrounded by the infantile army. It was a wondrous happiness to hear how familiarly he set forth the rudiments of the faith. He watched his little flock, and they watched him. He made himself a child among them.”

Another instance was that of Ignatius Loyola, who, for forty-six successive days, taught the children who came in crowds to him in one of the churches in Rome. And he made it a rule of his order that each superior, in entering on his duties, should catechize for forty days. It would be a very long list should I name all. But among them I may mention those known as S. Philip de Neri, and S. Vincent de Paul, as not only exhorting others to this work, but as doing it diligently themselves. The latter having learned that one of his priests had slighted the public catechizing, wrote to him as follows: “ I am very sorry to hear that instead of the public catechizing, you have substituted the preaching of a sermon. This is wrong, for the people have greater need of the catechizing

and profit by it more." The list might well be continued even down to our own days, and crowned by the name of one of the best Bishops in the Church of France, which is so much nearer to our own. I mean the great Bishop of Orleans, Bishop Dupanloup, perhaps, the greatest catechist of the age.

Amid the sadness of having greatly to differ from some who bear with us the Christian name, it is helpful and comforting thus to see and own the things in which they set us so good an example.

Coming now to later times, and our own Church, I must ask you to look for the Church's ideal and method in this matter in her authorized standard, the Book of Common Prayer. Take the Prayer Book of this national Church, and that of the Church of England, from which it is framed, and they will carry us back more than three hundred years.

Take the earlier standards and laws, and you will find in them no direction or suggestion for anything like our present Sunday-schools. But you will find, instead, a very positive and very different rule and method, a method which prescribes

18 The Place and Function of the

the order and substance of what is to be taught, the place where the teaching is to be done, and the person by whom the teaching is to be given. And that person is the pastor. Or, to use the exact words of the rule in the Prayer Book, "the minister of every parish." It does not tell him to appoint some one else to do the teaching. He himself is to do it. It is made a necessary part of the pastoral relation and duty. He cannot wash his hands from that responsibility by turning it over to a Sunday-school. The place, also, is distinctly appointed. It is to be "openly in the Church;" that is under the influence of the sacredness of the holy place. It tells him definitely what he is to teach: "some part of this catechism." Now, put together the things provided and see what a clear method is marked out. First, the holy parental relation, about which I have already spoken somewhat fully. Next, the grace of God given in holy baptism. Next, the watchful love and prayers and teaching of sponsors; one of the wisest provisions of the Church's care, but oh, how shamefully abused! How it has degenerated into a merely social form or ceremony! The solemn charge is

given: "Ye are to see that this child be taught so soon as he shall be able to learn;" "Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed." In hardly one case out of a hundred is this sacred duty done. The sponsors seem to think that their only duty is to appear at the service of baptism and to make the required responses. What a power for good the sponsor's office would be if it were honestly and earnestly used! Then comes the pastor's part, not to relieve parents and sponsors from their duty, but to help them in it, and to lead the children into the deeper and more spiritual meaning of the holy truths. And then the confirmation and the preparation for and the bringing to the Holy Communion. There is a cry becoming quite popular for graded classes and graded teaching in the Sunday-schools. But whose shall be the wisdom which could prepare any grading which would surpass or equal this the Church's own graded method for her little ones?

The Church's method for the training of children, as it stands on paper, is one of the most perfect and admirable that could be arranged. If car-

ried out in real action, the results would surely be excellent. But when parents who care anxiously for the bodies and minds of their children take little or no thought for their souls, and leave undone the duty laid upon them, both by nature and by God's express command; when sponsors utterly neglect and forget their solemn sacramental obligations; when pastors surrender to others their sacred responsibility, we cannot wonder that with the best and most beautiful theory for Christian education, we are failing to win and keep the children.

But it may be asked whether in thus magnifying and insisting on the Church's method as found in Bible and Prayer Book, I am not belittling the Sunday-school and leaving no place for it. Far from it. I am only trying to determine its right place; for if it does not keep to its proper place and relation, it will not be helpful, but harmful. And that place is simply as an auxiliary to the Church's higher ideal and method. If the Sunday-school really helps to the carrying out of that ideal, if it helps parents to do their duty, helps sponsors to do their duty, helps the pastors to reach

and teach the children, its work will be full of blessing. But so far as it is practically made a substitute for any of these, and relieves them from the sense of their own responsibility, in so far, it will be harmful. And so we reach, I think, a clear answer to the question, "What is the relation and function of the Sunday-school in the Church?" It is to be a pastoral agency under pastoral control for more efficiently carrying out the Prayer Book ideal of Christian education. It is to help the pastor as he tries to find access to the children's souls.

Let us think, then, somewhat more plainly about the relation of the Sunday-school to the pastor, and of the pastor to the Sunday-school. I say "pastor," and not "rector," here, because the former word denotes the spiritual relation, and the latter is the word for civil or ecclesiastical authority; and also because there are often those who have full pastoral authority, as appointed missionaries or ministers in charge, without legal right of permanence. I do not believe that there can be, nay, I am sure there cannot be, a really true and effective Church Sunday-school, accomplishing the spiritual results for which it is meant, unless the pastor is at

22 The Place and Function of the

once its head and its heart. He must be its life, its inspiration, its impulse, its central power. He must put into it his own life, his individuality, his spirituality. He must organize it, must control it, must direct it, must make his own influence its rule. He must know and control the teaching, both what is taught and the methods of teaching. I pity the pastor who surrenders to an association of teachers the right to determine by vote the course of lessons and the books. He is losing so much of his pastoral power when in that, or in any other way, the Sunday-school is separated from the pastor, or comes to think it can do its own work without him; when it looks upon the pastor's occasional presence as the coming in of a visitor to show a little interest in the work of some one else; when the pastor turns over the responsibility to some one else, and does not trouble himself with details; when officers and teachers feel that they are the controlling and directing power, then the Sunday-school, however thriving it may seem, is really becoming mischievous, because it is taking the children away from that immediate pastoral watchfulness and guidance which the Lord entrusted to His ministers. I am sure,

from long observation and careful study, that we touch here one of the greatest defects of our Sunday-school work; the chief reason for its loss of spiritual power. There may be a most admirable superintendent, a school organized and ordered after the most popular modern methods, and with most minute exactness, well qualified officers and earnest teachers, well chosen lines of study; but unless the pastor is there, with the pastor's love, with the pastor's head and the pastor's heart, it may seem to work excellently in intellectual results and machine-like order and financial fruits, but it will have no soul, no love, little spiritual fruit. I repeat, then, that the first requisite for a true and helpful Sunday-school is the pastor's enthusiasm, the pastor's presence, the pastor's love.

But when I have urged this upon the clergy, I have sometimes been told that it is impossible, under the present methods and demands of Church work. If this be so (I do not acknowledge it, but) if it be so, then, most emphatically, the present methods and demands of Church work must be wrong, radically wrong. If the children have not the place and part in the Church's work which the

24 The Place and Function of the

Lord means for them, it is time for a great change and re-ordering. No multiplication of services, no machinery of guilds and institutions, no untiring diligence of house to house visiting for older persons, can be an excuse for lack of pastoral, earnest love, and definite pastoral work for the children. If it is not possible, under the present methods of Church working, to give great pastoral care to the children, then, I repeat it, our methods must be wrong. But I deny that it is impossible. The busiest pastor, if he have the pastor's heart for children, can so order his own methods as to accomplish it. There are some, in my own knowledge, whose pastoral work is of the largest and the most exacting, who do this work for children grandly; and their success proves its possibility for others. I imagine the rector of a large city parish, say with eight hundred or a thousand, or, perhaps, more names on its roll of communicants; he has one or more assistant ministers, and, with their help, he keeps up the round of daily services, the multiplied communion, often twice or thrice a day, the many Sunday services and preachings, the frequent meetings of brotherhoods, guilds, and charitable organi-

zations, the visiting of the sick and the ministering to the poor. I imagine one of our younger men as, in riper years, likely to come to such position. And he might naturally ask us to tell him how, when that time shall come, he can, with all the incessant pressure of those complicated necessary duties, find time to add or bring in the other work of close personal push and influence with the children and in Sunday-school work.

And the question, in the form just proposed, suggests its own answer. It implies that all those other things must be done, and that this may be done. It implies that those things must first be cared for, and then this children's and Sunday-school business be added on, or brought in, if some little time and energy possibly be left. And just there is the vital error. Grant that the Holy Communion every Sunday was the primitive rule, and the Church's ideal. There is no law of the Church and no requirement or suggestion from the Lord for many administrations on the same day. They may in some few cases be helpful. But if for the sake of them, the Lord's own command, "Feed My lambs," is thrust into the background, then be sure

26 The Place and Function of the

that the multitude of services will be less pleasing to Him, and will bring Him less fruit than fewer celebrations, and more loving work for the children. It is cheering sometimes to hear the pastor read in his Sunday announcements the long list of daily or more than daily appointments and for the meeting of a great many excellent parish organizations, giving full and frequent provision for the spiritual privilege and blessing of the devout of full age. But I am sometimes sad when the list is ended, to note that with all that abundant provision for older souls, the little ones can scarcely touch the crumbs of pastoral care and love. If the rector of the largest and busiest city parish will put the spiritual work for children (not the providing of food or clothing or Christmas trees or entertainments, but) the real loving spiritual care for them, in the place which the Lord claims for them, among the very foremost, and he can and will not only find time to attend to it personally, but he will very soon know that in that fulfilment of holy responsibility, there are some of the very richest joys and greatest consolations and comforts of the pastor's life.

But while I thus insist upon the pastor's presence

and his control and direction in his Sunday-school. I do not mean that he is necessarily to be there from first to last, taking immediate, direct administration of every session and of all its details. He would lose his spiritual influence if the children saw him habitually busying himself with the minute inspection of roll-books, and library cards, and class discipline and little irregularities of behavior. The general who commands an army and inspires it, and keeps it up to discipline, and plans and directs its movements, has officers whom he trusts, and to whom he commits the carrying out of his plans and on whose fidelity and loyalty to him he can depend. The president of some great university is responsible for all its working. He, taking counsel, plans and organizes its various departments, selects or approves its professors, harmonizes their different duties into unity of method and purpose, holds them all together, leads and controls, and yet he does not needlessly busy himself with the details of the class-room methods and work of each professor. The general's presence and control are strongly felt in the army; the president's presence and control

28 The Place and Function of the

are felt in the university, although in minute matters he uses others and trusts them largely. And so, while the pastor must be responsible, and include in himself the entire responsibility, he may and he must delegate to others special and definite authority in certain departments, making all, however, responsible to him.

So, in our study of the functions of the Sunday-school, it becomes important to study this delegated authority in the workers. Chief among such workers, and the one on whom efficiency will largely depend, will be the officer commonly known as the superintendent; and the right relation between the pastor and this his chief helper is of very great importance. There have been cases where the pastor has surrendered authority, absolutely to the superintendent, and washed his own hands from responsibility. The true and helpful superintendent is not the pastor's substitute, but his loyal helper, his chief executive officer, throwing himself heartily into the pastor's plans and wishes; not substituting his own for them, but doing his utmost to make them effective and successful. He is like the second in command in an army; with real authority in his

office, and yet using that authority only in loving conformity to an authority still superior. It has been sad to me, sometimes, to see Sunday-schools where the superintendent seemed to resent the pastor's presence and influence, and to count it almost an interference with his own office and rights. And it was my own happiness that in the very large Sunday-schools of the Church of the Epiphany in Washington, in three large divisions, which were practically separate schools, I had as superintendents men of true godliness, sound in doctrine, men of strong intellect and wide reading, and of administrative ability, who gave all those admirable qualifications to the unfaltering carrying out of the pastor's plans and methods.

And the pastor, having such a superintendent must assist him largely. Confident of his helper's loyalty, he must not be too closely prying into the details of the work. It may be that matters will not always go perfectly. There come times in the best schools, when discipline will seem relaxed, when there is some disorder, some hitch, or annoyance. And as the pastor notes it, he must not step between the superintendent and the school in any

30 The Place and Function of the

of the details or incidents of immediate government or order, which have been committed to that officer's oversight. He will be as jealously careful to uphold the superintendent's authority in the school, as he would be to have his own upheld. In such matters he may take counsel with his chief officer, give him advice if need be, but will leave to him the execution of the things determined. In other words, the loyalty must be reciprocal. The superintendent must be loyal to the pastor, and the pastor must be loyal to the superintendent. Happy the pastor, happy the school, happy the children where there is such provision! And to secure it, it is plain that the choice of the superintendent must be made by the pastor himself. It is to be his executive officer, not one to carry out the will and wishes of the teachers and scholars, but the pastor's will and wishes. The ideas of democracy, run wild, have sometimes insisted that American principles are dishonored unless all the officers of the school, from superintendent down, are elected by the teachers. And to accomplish this, Sunday schools sometimes organize themselves as self-governing, independent associations. But the full personal confi-

dence and intimate relation I have tried to describe could not be secured by such election. He is to be the pastor's friend, and the pastor alone will know where to look for the necessary qualifications.

And as for those necessary qualities, he must first of all be a man of deep and earnest piety. Alas! that word "piety," through the sneering of some, has come to have an almost unhappy sense, and to denote the boastful affectation of devotion, the words, and the manner of godliness, rather than its deep reality. I am thinking rather of that real piety which God himself describes and praises in Cornelius: "A devout man and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."

None but one who loves God can teach others to love Him. None but one who himself prays can teach others to pray. None but one who himself studies the Holy Scriptures can rightly lead others into its truth and power. None but he who makes the Lord Jesus Christ his own daily pattern can inspire others to follow those blessed footsteps. I do not mean that the man with these qualities is to be held up as a shining example, that these qualities are to

32 The Place and Function of the

have such outward effect. I mean that these qualities must be in the man ; must make the character, out of which is to come the real spiritual power of his work. I can imagine a man without these qualities making an efficient teacher or head master in one of our public schools from which religious teaching and influence are largely excluded ; but not an efficient head master for a Sunday-school.

But besides this, the pastor will seek for one with good intellectual qualities and knowledge. There will be times when the pastor will be necessarily absent, and the superintendent must be ready to take his place in the general catechizing. And for an efficient catechist there will be needed not only careful study of the special lesson or subject for the day, but such readiness and clearness of general sacred knowledge, as may help to illustrate and brighten the lesson otherwise. And the mind best filled with such knowledge, and best stored, and best trained in its powers by large general reading, will be best fitted for the work. Other things being equal a man of culture will make the best superintendent. And he must be an enthusiastic lover of children. It may not be

easy to secure such admirably furnished helpers. But zeal for God and high mental qualities do often go together; and the pastor will seek for that happy union. I do believe that it can be done more often than it is. At any rate, we should seek for such, and not take the first fair man who offers himself, accepting willingness as a sufficient qualification. Most probably, the man needed will not offer himself. You may have to search him out and go after him, and then find him unwilling. When I remember how men in England like Gladstone and Selborne and many others like them, found time and heart and love, in the midst of overwhelming duties, to bring their nobly trained powers and their great attainments to Christ's service in Sunday-school work, I look in amazement on the nobly fitted laymen of our own land who stand all the day idle. I see many of them devout towards God, grandly educated, trained in legal or other business ways, with personal qualities nobly cultivated, and yet, thinking they fulfil all their responsibilities for holy use of such talents in acting as vestrymen, and attending the conventions and doing something on the secular side of Church business.

34 The Place and Function of the

If we have such men among our people, let us go after them. The best man is not always the man who seeks the place, but the man that the place calls for. Do not ask it as a favor ; call for it as a duty. Tell them God wants them ; He has given them the talent. He is not willing they should bury it. Speak to such with pastoral boldness and pastoral love and claim their powers for God.

But if, with all earnestness in seeking, the really strong man for the office cannot be had, the good, strong man who can be trusted, if we cannot get the man we need, shall we put up with the weak man we can get? And I say, emphatically, no! The superintendent is not absolutely necessary. A good superintendent will be a great help ; a poor one, or a weak one, will do great harm. We can do without a superintendent, if the right man cannot be had. One of the teachers can be asked to take a little authority. Or, best of all, the rector will be his own superintendent. It can be done, and if the rector gives to the work for children the place in the pastoral heart which the Lord wants it to have, however busy he may be, he will find the way to do it. I say this from personal ex-

perience. Before God called me to a Bishop's work, I had thirty-three years as a parish priest, and, during twenty-five years, with never less than two congregations to serve, I was always my own superintendent. And I look back upon those years as among the most fruitful with the young, and the most helpful for the larger work which came afterwards.

But let us stop here for the present. In presenting one's ideal of the function of the Sunday-school in its relation to the Church, we have, it seems, been thinking of its possibilities in the stronger parishes. In talking on this subject, one recently said to me: "Yes, that is all very good for a strong city church that has money enough to provide good rooms and people enough to draw upon for teachers and officers, and for many scholars, but what am I to do? A poor, country parson, with only a handful of people, and those very poor and not of the best education; with not more than fifteen or twenty children that I can possibly bring together; with no well-qualified teachers, and with no possibility of a good superintendent. And I answered: "My good brother, the Church makes your

36 The Place and Function of the

way plain. Follow her directions. Pass by classes and teachers and officers, and take those children under your own immediate, authoritative and loving pastoral care. If you have two services on Sunday in your country parish, give one of those services to your children in public catechizing and instruction; put your mind and heart in it; train them to take part in the regular service, and then, instead of a formal sermon, teach them. And the results will astonish you. Interest and win the children and they will bring the parents. It has been proved. I have known a city church where the average attendance at the second service was only sixty or seventy. The public catechizing was substituted for the sermon, and, in a year's time, that sixty or seventy had grown to three hundred. In St. Luke's church, Baltimore, large enough to hold some eight hundred people, its rector, the Rev. Dr. Rankin, for many years held such a catechizing; and very soon there was not an unoccupied seat in the church. The Church's appointed methods, as given in the Prayer Book, may not always agree with popular modern methods, but you may be sure they are the best. I sometimes

think that the Prayer Book is almost inspired, not with that immediate inspiration which God gave to the human penmen of the Holy Scriptures, but with an indirect and secondary inspiration, as the fruit of the experience of that Church to which Christ promised His own presence and help.

And so we come back to the question with which we began: the place and function of the Sunday-school in the Church. It is to be the pastor's helper in fulfilling the sacred responsibility which Christ has laid upon him, to be himself teacher and guide of the children.

Whatever the apparent success of a Sunday-school in numbers, in order, in financial results, in Easter offerings and Christmas festivals, if it separates the children from the pastor, it is a spiritual failure. And the little country or mission Sunday-school, with no superintendent, almost no teachers, and scholars so few as not to permit any definite organization, may be keeping pastor and children near each other, and thus, in the Lord's judgment, a success.

LECTURE II

IN speaking of the place and function of the Sunday-school in the Church, it becomes necessary, besides thinking of it as a whole, to think of the relations and workings of its several points. In my first lecture, I did so speak of the pastor and of the superintendent, I wish now to speak of teachers and scholars.

Among the confidences which come to a Bishop, and the request from clergymen for special counsel, the difficulties and perplexities in Sunday-school work come very often. And the point most frequently presented is about the teachers ; the difficulty of getting teachers enough ; of getting teachers well qualified for the work ; of half-hearted teachers ; of teachers with no heart at all in their work ; of teachers who claim to be independent and will not conform to Sunday-school rules. And out of the study thus required of me, and the long pastoral experience which went before, I venture to set forth some principles on these points :

What, then, is the real, true office of the teacher ?

And what his or her relation to the Sunday-school? If it be merely, or chiefly, to gain the interest and affection of a few children, to please them, so that they will come regularly; to keep them in decent order; to mark their attendance and library books, and to hear, with routine exactness, the appointed lesson, the office does not require any very high qualifications. There is no call in all this for much heart, for much spiritual life, for any great devoutness or careful knowledge. Almost any one of ordinary, decent life, without even being confirmed or a communicant, without personal devoutness or strong purpose, might take the office, if able only to give the Sunday hour and a half to the routine duties. And, unfortunately, many Sunday-school teachers are chosen, or accepted, with no higher idea or qualifications than these. Rectors or pastors often think that it is absolutely necessary to have a teacher for every five or six scholars, but even with three hundred scholars, ten good, earnest teachers, with a good superintendent, and a pastor thoroughly in earnest, could not only do better work and reach more hearts and souls, but even keep better order than three times as many mere order-

keepers. The teacher of a week-day school must pass a severe examination, not only in the branches which are to be taught, but in the methods and spirit of teaching, and as to his or her personal qualifications in that respect. Why should we not be at least as careful about those who are to be teachers for souls? In England, there are institutions and classes, especially for teaching and training Sunday-school teachers, just as there are, there and here, normal schools for ordinary school work. And they have a system of examinations and certificates for Sunday-school teachers, whose certificates are greatly valued. It may not be easy to get good teachers, but without them the Sunday-school will not hold its proper place, nor fulfil its necessary functions in relation to the Church. And it should be counted an absolute necessity, first of all, that every teacher must be confirmed and a communicant. If the work of the Sunday-school were merely to give a general religious teaching, or a knowledge of the persons, facts and geography of the Bible, this might not be necessary. A good Bible student, whether Methodist, Baptist, Romanist, or of any other Christian name, would do as well. But

the Church, as we know it, has its own clear, definite method for the training of youthful souls, and the teacher must work upon those principles and lines. That method is based upon the assurance of the child's adoption into covenant state and grace with God, at its baptism. It trains the child to believe in that state of grace, and to be sure of acceptance with God, as a member of Christ. A Christian from the moment of baptism, it is to be brought up as such from the beginning, and not taught to wait, in hope of becoming a child of God, at some later age, through the process of an emotional conversion. It is to be helped to look forward to spiritual growth in the means of grace which God has given in confirmation and Holy Communion. It should be taught, not to abdicate responsibility, or surrender the liberty and the power of the personal conscience to one who claims to be a spiritual director, but using, lovingly, all pastoral assistance and counsel when needed, to live in the confidence of its own nearness to the Lord. The true Church Sunday-school method is not filling the child's mind with the accurate memory of Scripture details, but the helping of the young soul to absorb and apply

42 The Place and Function of the

gospel principles and gospel truths in its own personal life. And surely, none save those who themselves have taken in those spiritual principles and truths can impart them effectively to others. I do not say a word, nor think a thought against the godly earnestness of those of other Christian name. They may be most excellent and helpful workers in Methodist, Baptist or Roman Sunday-schools, but we should have none but true Churchmen and Churchwomen for teachers.

“But,” says a doubting or timid pastor, “we must have a Sunday-school; we can get the children, but I cannot possibly find teachers among my own communicants. There is an intelligent man whom I can get, of excellent social standing and moral reputation, who is not a member of any religious body, and makes no profession of religion; his personal influence and standing would help our power and influence. And there are some good, devout Methodist and Baptist brothers or sisters, who, until they get a congregation of their own, are willing to give us their help. And, perhaps, from being Sunday-school teachers they may at last be won over to our communion.”

But do you not see how that excellent man, of no particular religion, would, by the very force of those excellent qualities, be throwing the power of his example, and all the confidence he could win from the children against the very aims we seek? The children would say, "We love our teacher; he is a good man; but he has not been confirmed, he does not come to the Communion, and why should not we follow his example?"

And as for the Methodist or Baptist brothers and sisters, they cannot help letting their own particular views come out in their teaching; and all the more strongly, because they come out unconsciously and almost imperceptibly. And as for the suggestion of winning over such teachers themselves, we must answer that the purpose of the Sunday-school is not to proselyte the teachers, but to teach and train and mould the scholars. It may require firmness sometimes to say "No," to a kindly-meant offer; but very large experience has convinced me that in such cases one can say "No" firmly, and yet, say it so kindly and reasonably as to win respect instead of giving offense.

The next qualification I would name is a very

44 The Place and Function of the

earnest and determined purpose to put mind, heart and soul in the work ; to do it thoroughly. In my earlier lecture, I called attention to some possible dangers in the multiplication of guilds, societies and other personal machinery. These dangers would be less if we could avoid the temptation which comes to many in our flocks, to think that the more societies they join, the more work they are doing. When I find a young man who is at the same time a member of St. Andrew's Brotherhood, and of the choir and a lay reader, and a district visitor, and a Sunday-school teacher ; or, a young woman who is a daughter of the king, and has a sewing class, and belongs to the Altar Guild, and has membership in some other organizations, and is also a Sunday-school teacher, I am very sure that the poor heart and soul are divided and distracted among so many interests, so that some of them, if not all, are cared for very inefficiently. And I have generally found that the Sunday-school work is the chief sufferer, having only the little fragment of heart earnestness that may possibly be left, after all the other things have received attention. If I wanted earnest, thorough, whole-souled teachers, I could say to each one

as the appointment was made, and to the class committee: "My dear friends, for the dear Lord's sake, I want all your strength and earnestness for this one duty. These children's souls are a sacred trust which He, for a time, commits to you, through me. That trust is great enough to call for all that you can do. Constant study of the Bible, and careful study of the special lessons; your own prayers for help; your out of school visits and influence, with your regular attendance at the pastor's instructions and counsels, these are enough for all the time, all the thought, all the energy you can give to Church work. Do not scatter your earnestness. Concentrate it. Do one thing thoroughly, instead of four or five things feebly. There are enough to care for those other agencies. Give me, give God, your whole strength in this one duty." I am sure that there lies the secret of some great successes and of some sad failures in parochial work. He would be a very poor commander of an army who would try to have the same man in three or four different companies.

Next in order, perhaps, among the qualities which make a good teacher, will be the ability to

46 The Place and Function of the

win and keep respect and confidence. Children are keen observers ; they are very severe critics ; quick to take likings or dislikings ; to give confidence, or to withhold it, and things outside of spiritual qualifications sometimes have great influence. Trifles sometimes become important. It is not a sin to chew tobacco, but I have known a man to lose his power in Sunday-school because he did it habitually when with his class. It is not a sin for a young woman to chew gum, but I have known that little thing to awaken ridicule and forfeit respect. Untidiness of person or dress, ungentleness of manner, ungrammatical speech, the use of slang, a prevailing habit of light talking and jesting, any of these may mar the relation between the teacher and the class ; and, worst of all, perhaps, will be a lack of sufficient knowledge. The scholars will not long respect as teacher one who does not know much more than they know themselves ; and they will very quickly find it out. If a teacher never goes beyond the printed question and answer, never has any sidelight of suggestion or illustration to throw upon the lesson, cannot sympathize with or meet helpfully the puzzles and doubts that sometimes come from

children's lips ; if the whole idea of teaching is confined to hearing a recitation, be sure that the children will detect that inefficient mechanicalness even before it is perceived by superintendent or pastor. The teaching spirit, the teaching faculty, the teaching power, are indispensable. Some of the very greatest scholars in the various branches of science would be failures as teachers. Some of the greatest Bible students would be useless in Sunday-school. They know how to accumulate, but not how to impart. The successful Sunday-school teacher must know how to impart knowledge, and must have some knowledge worth imparting.

I will name one more essential qualification for a helpful Sunday-school teacher. It is unfailing, punctual regularity. No other excellences will make up for lack of this. If I were heard now by some who may be disposed to become teachers, I would say something like this : " If duties at home or circumstances which you cannot control make your punctual regularity impossible, consider it a providential indication that you are to work for Christ not as a Sunday-school teacher, but in some other way." This will be one (but not the only one) of

48 The Place and Function of the

the real tests and proofs of your earnestness. The teacher should be not the last, but the first to arrive, ready to receive them, showing that they are expected, and that some one is watching for them. The class that has to wait often for a teacher, needs a new teacher. And I mean not only punctuality of hours, but regularity of continuous Sundays. It will not always do to send a substitute. It may do in some great necessity, sickness or the like, when neither teacher nor scholars want to break the bond of interest and affection. But I have known cases where the teacher's social engagements, or trips of pleasure, brought it to pass, that some chance substitute, perhaps taken at the last moment, was on duty almost as often as the teacher. The substitute may hear a recitation and keep order, but cannot bring the teacher's heart and loving, personal interest; and it is through the personality of the teacher that the scholar's soul is touched and held.

If I need any apology for dwelling so long and so minutely on the teacher's office, I find it in the fact that the functions or duties of the several

parts together make up the function of the Sunday-school, which was the subject assigned to me. No doubt, you would tell me that I have made the teacher's office very difficult and very exacting. I will be glad if I have succeeded in so doing. I want to make it plain that in the teacher's office are grand opportunities for cultivating the souls of children in all Christian character and grace. I want to make it plain that there are also fearful possibilities of hindering and thwarting the life of Christ in those young souls by carelessness or half-hearted work. The souls of children are not playthings for unoccupied moments of time. They are a trust from God. There was One who said: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth Me." That blessing is not to be won by any half way work, and those same blessed lips said: "See that ye offend not one of these little ones that believe in Me," and added, you will remember, a very fearful warning.

I think I can best sum up these thoughts about this part of the function or duty of the Sunday-school by giving you here the letter of counsel

50 The Place and Function of the

which I prepared many years ago, and which I placed in the hands of each one to whom a class was committed.

Instructions to a newly-appointed Sunday-school teacher :

My dear friend : In committing to your charge the class I have just assigned to you, I wish to have you understand distinctly the duties of the office, its work, and its responsibilities. You will please understand that you fill the office known in old times in the Church as that of the catechist. The children of your class are placed under your instruction and influence to accomplish a definite end and purpose. You are the rector's assistant, so far as they are concerned, to prepare them rightly, in due time, for being confirmed and admitted to the Holy Communion. These things, as definite results, to be sought and expected in your work, should be always in your thoughts. It will not only give earnestness and definiteness to your teachings in the class, but to your out-of-school influence and prayers for them. You will, therefore, seek to be as well acquainted as may be with each scholar ; to

know the character of each ; to find out what each one lacks in information, or in devout disposition or earnestness. As the standard fixed by the Church, you will very carefully train them in the Church's catechism, in knowledge of its words and in understanding of its meaning. And, in so doing, you will take occasion often to speak to them of confirmation, and of the Holy Communion as blessings which they should earnestly desire.

You will be expected to train them by example, as well as by word, to join reverently in the worship, always to speak distinctly in the responses, and to sing where they are able to do so, to kneel really during the prayers, and to observe all the reverent customs of the Church.

You will encourage them to regular attendance at Church services, and will inquire, often and carefully, as to their regularity in this respect. You will see that each scholar has Prayer Book and Hymn Book and brings them regularly to school.

You will remind them of the Christian duty of giving to God, encourage them in the regular Sunday-school offerings and especially try to make each a willing contributor to the missionary fund

52 The Place and Function of the

of the school. You will be expected to set your scholars an example of punctuality. A teacher habitually unpunctual ought to resign. If at any time unavoidably absent, it will be your duty either to provide, as a substitute, some communicant of the Church, or to give to the rector or the superintendent such timely notice that he can make provision. If your scholars become irregular, you will be expected to search them out during the week, and to learn the reason. Your duties are not limited to the Sunday-school room, and Sunday-school hours.

You will be expected to remember your scholars in your own private prayers, and to seek in every way their growth in grace and knowledge. And, last of all, if you find that your zeal and interest are failing; that your class, through your fault, is losing interest or becoming irregular; that you do not care enough for Sunday-school to come every Sunday and to come early; that you fail to master the lessons, and go through the work as mere routine; then you will either repent and renew your zeal; or, failing in that, you will resign your class to the rector.

May our good Lord, by His grace, make you earnest and true in this blessed work for Him who said: "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My name, receiveth Me."

I wish it could be in my power to express far more strongly my estimate of the importance and sacredness of the teacher's office and of the immense possibilities of its power in the Church. I am speaking now of our own Church Sunday-school only. The reports made at our last General Convention show that we have more than 47,000 teachers. The number of scholars is about 442,000, so that on an average the souls of ten children are put under each teacher's influence. What an army of the Lord! What possibilities for work made definite by organization! What possibilities for great results, if we might imagine all those 47,000 teachers reaching or coming near to the standard of efficiency which I have tried to set forth. Next in its possibilities for children's souls, next to the work of parents and sponsors and pastors, comes the office of teacher; I mean, next in theory and ideal. But in our actual prac-

54 The Place and Function of the

tice, where the parents' and sponsors' duties are so neglected, and pastors are so overcrowded, I am almost ready to claim for it the first place. We have our vestrymen, our delegates to Conventions, our lay readers, but in power for usefulness and the sacredness of responsibilities, the office of the Sunday-school teacher is far above them all.

Take another way of estimating the place and function of the Sunday-school in the Church. Our latest reports give the number of clergymen in our Church as 5,149; the number of lay readers as 2,316, and the number of teachers, as I said before, as more than 47,000. The average pastor, even if regularly at the Sunday-school, speaks to the children in the mass, as a school, and can hardly get in the Sunday-school, very near to each single soul. The time will come, in the more immediate pastoral preparing for confirmation, when he must deal with the children soul by soul, and very lovingly. And the teacher is doing the preliminary work which is to lead up to that. We think of the power of preaching sermons as one of the divinely appointed methods, but the sermons almost always fly far above the children, and out of their reach or com-

prehension. We think of the great army of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, with its 13,000 members ; of the Daughters of the King, and I am indeed thankful for their earnestness and the good which they accomplish ; but, when I find that by the very character of their organization and their work, it is not possible for them to have that near and constant access to the individual soul, which is easily possible to every one of that far greater army of 47,000 teachers, I must claim and assert that as an instrument for doing Christ's spiritual work, the Sunday-school, both in possibilities, and with all its defects in actual fruit, far, far outweighs them.

Let me turn, now, to another bearing of our subject. I have spoken of the function and work of the Sunday-school in its relation to the pastor ; and again in its relation to the teachers. Let us think, now, of the function and duty of the Sunday-school in its relation to the scholars for they, the children and their souls, make the one great reason for having Sunday-schools at all.

First of all, what children are to be sought and received ? On what principles or conditions are they to be gathered and enrolled ? It seems a

56 The Place and Function of the

strange question. "Why, I take at once every child I can possibly get," I was recently told by an earnest clergyman. It may be a good way for making a large roll and crowding the rooms, especially before Christmas and Easter, but for sound, solid, lasting spiritual results, it may not be the best. There are indeed exceptional cases, where it would do well at the beginning of some missionary effort in a place or district where religion is very much neglected, and indifference and ignorance are ruling; or where, for some other reason, the work must have a specially missionary character. I recognize that there are two ways in which our Sunday-schools are to be studied, as a part of the missionary work of the Church, and as a part of its settled and definite parochial life. Unhappily, the word "parochial" and its mother-word, "parish," have lost their reality and definiteness of meaning. The parish, as it was in the old times of the Church, and as it still is, I am glad to say, in Maryland and Virginia, is a region or district with definite boundaries. All the souls within that district are the cure or sacred charge of the minister of the parish. He counts himself

responsible to God for love and loving duty to them all, so far as he can possibly reach them. Whether they be rich or poor, refined or rude, educated or ignorant, devout or defiant; whether they acknowledge him as pastor, or count themselves as of some other Communion, he has a debt and a duty to them all. Modern customs, indifference, itching ears, sectarianism, do sorely mar this beautiful parish idea, but there is enough left to make it wondrously helpful still. And the true parish Sunday-school will work on parish lines and limits. It will try to fill them. If one has the happiness to be the minister of such a parish, he will have a precisely definite responsibility as to the care of children's souls. He will go first to every household the heads of which acknowledge him as pastor, and speaking with confident authority, warmed with real love, he will claim, and claim again, his pastoral right to have the children under his pastoral teaching; and the parents' duty to acknowledge and sustain that right. There will be even Church parents who are indifferent, and count it a matter of their own pure will and pleasure whether they shall

58 The Place and Function of the

send their children for the minister's instruction or not. But a kindly appeal to the Prayer Book's words to sponsors, and to the rubrics after the catechism which state the parents' duty will be very helpful; especially if they may believe that by sending their children to Sunday-school, they will be really putting them under the pastor's teaching, and not under some weak substitute. The parents in our recognized flocks may not always at once see their duty and privilege, perhaps because we do not often enough remind them of it by our loving earnestness. But with the assurance that in going to the Sunday-school they will really be under the pastor's care, they can be persuaded.

I am still speaking of real parishes with definite boundaries; and on the principle that the pastor has responsibility before God, more or less direct for all souls within it, and I am speaking of direct, personal, pastoral seeking. When the Good Shepherd knew that one of His sheep was astray, He did not stay at home and send one of His men to seek it. He went after it Himself, and brought it home on His shoulder.

So the true parish priest will go himself, ear-

nestly and untiringly to the families that never come to church, and are trying to live without it; who care little for religion and keep no Sunday. That charge is especially laid upon the clergy, when at the ordination to priesthood, each one is commanded "to seek for Christ's sheep that are scattered abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of the naughty world." Those irreligious households are as much a part of the parish flock, as the homes of the regular church goers. Those children of prayerless parents need us more than those whose parents can teach them to pray. They have right to pastoral love and care, and to the best it can do or give for them.

And besides these there will be families which instead of owning the pastoral oversight declare themselves to be of some other Christian body. We may not obtrude upon them the claim to pastoral authority. But we can prove to them our pastoral love, in gentle approach. The parish priest who knows that in the Church, with its baptism and catechism and confirmation and Holy Communion, he is God's minister of better blessings than can be found elsewhere, has the right

60 The Place and Function of the

and the duty to hunger for all the souls within his parish lines; and the right, lovingly and with discretion, to seek for them all.

But this positive parish system is to be found now only in two or three Dioceses; and elsewhere we find what comes nearer to a congregational method. In our cities especially the congregation is composed of the householders and persons who have voluntarily associated themselves for worship in a particular church. The only bond of pastoral relation or duty is in their voluntary recognition of the pastor. They are free, at any time, to sever the relation, and, without even change of residence, to put themselves under another rector. There cannot be the definiteness and permanence of pastoral responsibility and duty which make part of the happiness of real parochial relation. Churches stand near together with no lines to separate them, and individuals and children float easily backward and forward between them. It is not so easy a task to determine the constituency of such a Sunday-school. The rector cannot go to the indifferent in his neighborhood with any claim that they belong to him.

Or if, instead of going himself, he sends out Sunday-school visitors, he finds himself in collision with like efforts on the part of some of his neighbors. He has no pastoral right of visitation. Plainly, then, his Sunday-school must consist first and almost entirely of the children of those households which, more or less directly, voluntarily accept his pastoral leading. I was about to say that it ought to include them all. But I remember most thankfully that in my own pastoral experience, I have known a few instances where parents and sponsors did lovingly fulfil their sacred duty; where the children were faithfully taught at home, and instead of being sent by their parents to the Sunday-school, were taken by them to the fuller worship in the church services. And in the case of such children we should not, in order to swell numbers, disturb that really divinely ordained method.

But in trying to secure all the others, it will be found that many of what we call "the well-to-do people" are more and more unable or unwilling to use the authority which would ensure such general attendance. I cannot much wonder when so large a part of the Sunday-school idea is in wishy-washy

62 The Place and Function of the

library books, entertainments, Christmas trees and gifts. But I do believe, and I have seen it proved in more than one instance, that wherever the pastor throws his own holy earnestness into that work, and by thorough, strong teaching, and firm, strong, but loving discipline, lifts it out of the shallowness of average Sunday-school routine, he will soon have full following. Let us give something really worth coming for, and parents and scholars will not wait to be sought and coaxed.

There is another side. Every Sunday-school, even if in a strong city church, will have more or less of a missionary character. There will be some outside of the recognized flock, who can be taken under its influence; very few perhaps in some strongly settled congregation, many in the weaker places and in new missionary efforts. And then the temptation comes to make the Sunday-school attractive by lowering the tone and discipline, and modifying the positiveness of teaching which the Church has definitely appointed. Unhappy the Sunday-school where that so-called missionary influence predominates. Better, far better, to have only thirty scholars well taught in the Gospel

truths as the Prayer Book and the Church have drawn them from God's Word, than double or treble that number, with teaching weakened by accommodation to prejudices, and kept together chiefly by appeals to their gratification. The pastoral church ideal and standard must rule. The missionary side should be obedient to that; and even that missionary power upon what are called outsiders, will so be more and more effective. We do not win confidence, we lose it, by watering down the truth.

But these are all suggestions about the gathering; and it is important to think about some principles of exclusion. There is a very great difficulty to be overcome if the Sunday-school is to fulfil its functions. I mean the fickleness of the attendance of the children; the ease with which they drift from school to school, looking for the place which offers the greatest attractions. And closely connected with this is the multiplication of attendance. I have known a child to be enrolled in two separate Sunday-schools of the Church, going to each on alternate Sundays. And I have known others going to one Sunday-school in the morn-

64 The Place and Function of the

ing, and to one of some other religious body in the afternoon. It is absolutely inconsistent with the true Sunday-school idea. It should be rigidly forbidden. If the child's spiritual training is the end that is sought, one consistent method of training, one consistent pastoral authority, the consistent personal influence of one teacher, the unity of one system of doctrine and lessons, all these are imperatively necessary. The opposite is not Sunday-school training. It is Sunday-school dissipation. No child should be permanently retained on the roll who continues to attend any other Sunday-school, even though it be a school of our Church. In a mission school, at first perhaps this could not be rigidly enforced. And my own experience has proved that even in a mission school, that principle enforced after three months' attendance, with kindly explanation of the reason for it, as for the child's own good, instead of giving offense inspired confidence. I could tell of some most interesting cases; but instead let me give you the substance of a little note which I had printed for the parents:

“ I find that your daughter, after some months' attendance at our morning Sunday-school, is still

going in the afternoon to the Sunday-school of another denomination. It is not helpful to your child to have her interest and duties so divided. She should have only one pastor, one Sunday-school teacher. She is a good girl, and a pleasant scholar. But for her sake, for her best Christian training, I ask you to decide between the two. If you prefer the other school, we shall be sorry to lose her, but we are sure it will be for her good to have undivided pastoral care, and we will not take it unkindly. May God's blessing be with her." In many instances as I have said this frank dealing kept them with us; but when the decision was otherwise, I am sure the unity thus enforced was better for the child's spiritual life.

It will be observed, I am sure, that these suggestions or rules are based upon the conviction that the first and ruling purpose of the Church Sunday-school is the spiritual education, under the influence of the pastor, of the children divinely committed to his care. It is the building them up in the knowledge and practice of Christian faith and duty. It shuts out that too common idea of the Sunday-school, which would make it chiefly an instrumen-

66 The Place and Function of the

talities by which children are to be coaxed, petted and bribed into a weak adhesion to the Church, with the impartation of such loose religious ideas as may be made to accompany it. Let the pastor say to himself, "Here are these children which the Lord has committed to my pastoral care. They are living within my parish lines, or they are of households which accept my pastorate. Before I reach out for others, I must first do my duty to these. I must see that these learn the truths which the Church appoints." And you will see, I am sure, that the whole method of the Church's provision for the teaching and blessing of children is with this idea. The catechism, leading to confirmation and Holy Communion, is prepared and appointed definitely for the recognized children of the Church. It is built positively upon the foundation of the child's baptism. There are other ways for reaching the unbaptized, or the neglected children of unchristian parents, or of those who are not of the Church. It is praiseworthy and important to do it. But to bring down or weaken for that purpose the grand idea and method of the Church's training of her own

baptized children would be a very great and harmful error. There should be mission Sunday-schools. There are semi-mission Sunday-schools in some of the chapels supported by stronger congregations where the gathering and preliminary work for the unchristian and neglected can be done, and where it would be best done. There might well be in the stronger schools, a small preparatory department or class-room for such use; just as the early Church had its separate places for the unbaptized catechumens and for the initiated; a method so valuable that our wise Bishop Ingle in China found it necessary to establish it in his work.

But first of all, every well-settled parish or congregation should have its own Sunday-school for the clear and unmixed purpose of giving to its own younger members the fulness of their spiritual right in the Church's instruction and training. The school may be smaller in numbers, but its spiritual fruit will be more plenteous and permanent. If we keep up that standard of membership, and a high standard of definite teaching and discipline and training, we will find that instead of being coaxed to

68 The Place and Function of the

come, parents will be seeking for their children, and the children for themselves, the advantages which such schools will give them. There can be no more harmful method, whether in Sunday-school, or in preaching, or in any branch of pastoral work than that of watering down the truth to win favor by pleasing prejudices. There was no such fear of positiveness in our Lord's teaching nor in that of His first Apostles.

The Church has in the Creed, a clear, strong, positive statement and declaration of the faith. It has inherited with jealously guarded growth from apostolic times, well defined usages of worship. It has handed down continuously from those same early days, a ministry in three-fold order which has authority from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and the promise of His presence. It has as a steward, and it administers, the gifts of the manifold grace of God in the Holy Sacraments; and God Himself has made it the witness and keeper of His Word.

If we do not tell our children fully and boldly and strongly of these great blessings, we are robbing them of their right, and preparing the next generation for a Churchmanship, a Christianity and tone

of personal piety even lower and weaker than what we now have.

May God help us to be faithful and to speak His Word with boldness.

LECTURE III

A FEW words with regard to the scope of these lectures. I must confess to having had a little uncertainty at the first. The subject suggested to me was "The Function of the Sunday School in the Church." The question arose whether I should go into details of the work, or limit myself to some larger views and general theories. So I went to our good friend, Webster's Unabridged, and I find there, as the definition of "function," "the course of action which peculiarly pertains to any public officer in Church or State; the activity appropriate to any business or profession." And so, with mind relieved, I speak of the working of the Sunday-school. Having spoken already about the pastor, the officers, and the teachers, we come now to study the ideal of the instruction. But what does that word "instruction" really mean? It is the opposite of destruction. Destruction is the tearing down or disarranging of something. Instruction is the building up and orderly arranging. The word

is commonly used as if exactly equivalent to "teaching," but it really means much more. A great deal of teaching may be done without any real building up at all. It is only the wise, well ordered and effective teaching, which has such result. And it is the wise, well-ordered and effective teaching that I mean when I speak of Sunday-school instruction. (If, in what I say about it, I repeat some things already said, I feel that the importance of the subject will justify it.)

Such instruction must have two elements. It must deal both with the mind and with the soul. The mind is to be trained in the knowledge of holy truths, and the soul is to be trained in the powers and use of holy affections and holy habits. The two parts of training are indeed, or ought to be, always closely blended and united. But we may think of them separately; and in this connection we are often asked what books, what questions, what catechisms, what systems we would commend as best. I hear of the International Series, of the Inter-Diocesan Series, of the Bishop Doane Series, of the Blakeslee Method, of the Dupanloup Method; and if all the pastor had to do were to select the one

which seemed to him to promise best, and place it in the hands of teachers and scholars, and leave it to work itself by following it literally, the task would be very easy. Unfortunately, that method is too often followed, and the mere committal to memory and machine-like recitation of set questions and answers is made the test of the work. But, at best, any such series of books or questions cannot supply all the teaching. They can be but a help to it, a frame-work or skeleton on which to build it. In our universities or seminaries he would be counted an utterly weak and unworthy professor who limited his classroom duty to making it sure that the students committed to memory and recited accurately a set task of words. He must be far in advance of the students ; far in advance of the letter of the best text-books. He must himself have taken in and mastered the principles, the beauties, the inner real life and soul of the science he is to teach. He must have light of his own which he can throw upon and into the text-books. So, putting the best text-books in the teacher's hands will not make a good Sunday-school teacher. With one who is soul-full of love for God and desire for knowledge,

Bible and Prayer Book would be text-books sufficient. Without such qualifications, the very best system of text-books or teachers' helps ever devised by man would be only instruments for a dreary, mechanical grind.

But before we go beyond the Bible, the Prayer Book and the Catechism in our choice of books, there are some larger questions to be settled. Before the text-books of any one class or professor in a university are determined, the idea, the purpose, the scope of the whole course must be clear, and the harmony of combined and progressive teaching is to be aimed at that end. If the idea be, as I fear it too often is, to give what bits of information may be possible to a child who comes irregularly for a few months, and upon whom we have no firm and lasting hold, I was about to say that almost any method or book would answer. But even in such cases, the best will be best. And if I could, with some child, have only such chance opportunities, I would pin my teaching on the catechism of the Church, with the Apostles' Creed as the centre, as the very highest and best of the true teaching of the gospel. But I am thinking, now, of a school of

74 The Place and Function of the

settled work, where the pastor's love can gather, not so much the chance comers, as the children of his own recognized flock, the baptized children who have been divinely entrusted to his pastoral care. He must plan for continuous and progressive work. I have heard a clergyman say : " I find it the best plan to change the text-books very often. The children soon get tired of one system. Three years ago, I had the Inter-Diocesan Series ; the next year, the Huntington books, and now I have the Bishop Doane Series." It is plain that the books were expected to do the work, and to furnish interest for the scholars. Imagine a university or seminary re-ordering its whole method and system every year, to gratify the students' fancy for change.

A baptized child of the Church is brought in very early years to the infant class, and the whole method of the Sunday-school should be framed upon the purpose of giving to that child, it may be for many years, the training in mind and soul which the Church has provided and commanded. Take that one child, then, with growing mind and soul, as the starting point. The ground is to be prepared in the first and simplest ideas of Christ, and prayer, and

love, and worship. After that, the foundation is to be laid in the thorough mastery of the catechism, that wonderfully simple and wonderfully complete digest of the very essence of the Bible and the gospel. And so the child is led to be ready in mind, and, if the soul, too, has been moulded, ready and glad in soul for its early confirmation. And after that, upon and around that mastery in the Catechism of the great Gospel truths, with that ever in mind and continually renewed, will come, in Bible classes and communicant classes, or perseverance classes, if you choose to call them so, the growth into the wider knowledge of the Bible, and of all Christian truth and life. Unhappily, many of our Sunday-schools are planned on the idea of keeping a child only for a season or a year, and of doing what can be done in that little time. If we adopt that plan, parents and children will be ready enough to accept it, but if we plan higher and call and invite them to permanent, thorough and continuous training, many of them, and more and more each year, will thank us for thus bringing them under permanent pastoral power.

What I have been saying suggests the thought of

76 The Place and Function of the

what are called graded schools. Certainly, there must be a gradation for each individual child. But whether the whole school should be so organized in its classes is another question. All Sunday-schools have some such grading. There are at least the three divisions of infant classes, the general department, and the Bible classes for Bible Study, Church History, Christian Biography, and the higher doctrines. Happy the child who, beginning early, passes under one loving pastor's oversight through such a continuous system. Not only the great universities, but our simplest public and private schools need to have such continuous method. And I cannot consent to the plea that it is impossible to devise and carry out the same wisdom in our Sunday-schools.

Pass, now, from the ideal of the method of organizing and teaching to the ideal of the real substance, what is to be taught. And for that we need not be in doubt. The Church, guided and led by the overruling power and presence of our Lord, has most wondrously given it to us. When I so speak of the Church, I think of it as I wish we always could and did, as a divine body filled with a divine

life, made up of human elements indeed, with all their weaknesses, even as our human bodies are made from coarsest and commonest atoms of earthly matter. But as that material body is only the instrument of the living soul which inspires and rules it, and which is the real man, so that divine body which He Himself distinctly claims as His own body is, with all its human elements of weakness, the instrument of the spirit of Christ, which is its life, which is in it, which guides and overrules it.

I do not, as I have already said, claim direct inspiration for the Prayer Book, such inspiration as led and ruled the evangelists in writing the four-fold Gospel, or the Apostles in their letters to the Churches; but I do claim for it, and I fully believe, a secondary and less direct inspiration. It was not without divine guidance and presence and directing power, that through all the changes and chances of human strifes and errors, for nineteen centuries, we have to-day the very heart and life of the Gospel, condensed and clear, in the Book of Common Prayer, as the practical guide and handbook for Christian worship, Christian instruction, and Christian life. When I study these things I

78 The Place and Function of the

am not afraid to say, as David said, of the earthly Zion, "God is in the midst of her, therefore, shall she not be removed."

"But," says an objector, "I prefer to take a higher standard. The Bible is above the Prayer Book; and I feel that I must go directly to God's own Word and teach them that, instead of putting the Prayer Book above the Bible and substituting it for the Bible." And we answer, "The Bible is above the Prayer Book, just as heaven is above the earth, but we must begin on earth in order to reach heaven. Just as the top round of the ladder is higher than the lowest, but we must begin with the lowest and climb from that to the steps above." Yes, the Bible is above the Prayer Book. It is the standard to which the Prayer Book appeals, and to which it must be conformed. And it is because the most effective way for teaching the great Bible lessons is by beginning with the Prayer Book, that we make it our guide and manual for Bible teaching. They who make it their boast, and claim to teach the Bible and the Bible only, have, and must have, their very many helps and introductions, their question books and

leaflets. And we find our best help and introduction, our best digest of gospel truth, our best application of those truths in spiritual and devotional directness, our best aid to teachers, not in the hastily-prepared manuals and quickly-perishing leaflets of the day, but in that sacred manual, whose treasures began to be collected by the first Apostle's hands, and have been growing side by side with and help those other methods, as the Church's experienced wisdom in the teaching of her children.

Whatever other helps and books, then, we may have, whatever their attractiveness, or their accuracy of fact and detail, unless they are based upon the Church's ideal and law of religious instruction; unless they recognize and follow the Prayer Book method and are ruled by its spirit, unless they conform to its Christian year, and its standard and patterns of Christian life, such manuals or books will not be helpful, but harmful, in the Sunday-school of the Church. For this reason, among others, I am pained whenever I hear of an instance where the International lessons have been adopted in one of our Sunday-schools. For those who have no Christian year, so wisely built upon

80 The Place and Function of the

the very order of the life and teaching of our Lord, no clear ideal of the Christian life, as beginning with God's grace in infant baptism, and growing from grace to grace, for such, those International lessons, and the like, may well agree with and help their methods, but with all other possible points of excellence, they distract from the Church's pathway of training, which we, as true men, are bound to follow.

But even in that close following, there is room for helpful diversity. Just as each pastor, while all are preaching the same great truth, puts into his preaching the traits, the life, the power, the impulse of his own personality, even so, in following that same great outline of instruction, we may avoid the machine-like coldness of absolute uniformity, and give to each Sunday-school its own individuality. I was about to say, almost its own personality. The first Apostles taught the very same great truths; they had one great, divinely-given system or standard to which every one conformed himself. But what power was put in their work, when into this larger unity there entered their strong, personal enthusiasm.

Am I over-enthusiastic in my honor and praise

for the Church Catechism? Enthusiastic I am, but not too much so. And after more than fifty years of studying it and using it in pastoral work, it is still with me a growing enthusiasm. I have yet to find, outside of the Bible itself, anything which can compare with it, as a full and satisfactory statement of the necessary things; of "what a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." Simple enough to be plain to a child's understanding. Yet, that simplicity is one of its great glories. For writing a helpful introduction to any science, it needs the hands and the mind of a master. No mere tyro in chemistry could write a safe school manual. And that simple catechism was a fruit of the full but patient wisdom of some of the greatest men of the great English Reformation. Yet, it was once criticised as being too simple. The Puritan faultfinders, at the Savoy Conference of 1661, objected to it on that ground, and suggested, at the same time, among other things that it would be "convenient to add somewhat particularly concerning the nature of faith, of repentance, the two Covenants, of justification, sanctification, adoption, and regeneration." To which the Bishops replied most wisely: "The

82 The Place and Function of the

catechism is not intended as a whole body of divinity, but as a comprehension of the articles of faith, and other doctrines most necessary to salvation." And yet, though not so intended, it is, wondrously, a whole body of divinity, condensed into such brevity, and expressed in language so simple, as to be fitted for a child's mind ; yet it can be, keeping to its own perfectly logical order, expanded by full and minute study, till it covers the whole range of theological learning.

Many years ago, speaking with a very learned and helpful professor in theology, to whom I was greatly indebted in my own early studies, I asked him whether he had a plan or scheme for the whole course of theological training. And he answered that he had, but he did not make it known to his students. He used it as his own guide, and on it he built all his work. " My own summary of theology," he said, " is the Church Catechism. I find it capable of almost infinite expansion, and in each year's study, I find I have still something to learn."

It is possible, of course, for one to teach the Catechism in a dry, formal way, as merely to be committed to memory, without enlargement or il-

illustration, or personal application. And when it is so used, I do not wonder that scholars rebel against it. I lately saw a number of the *Sunday School Magazine*, which claims to give complete and thorough helps for teaching the Inter-Diocesan Lessons. It had 112 pages and in them all I found only three allusions to the appointed Catechism lessons; and these were only by printing in not very prominent place, but in very small type, the text of the questions appointed. Not a word of explanation or illustration; not an effort to show how something in the lesson from Holy Scripture might bear upon and light up the Catechism.

But I must not be misunderstood. I desire the very fullest and best Bible knowledge for all the Church's children. But I am most absolutely sure that the Church's Prayer Book method for giving Bible knowledge is the best. And remarkable proofs of it sometimes come. Some ladies once called on me, stating that they were not of this Church, they were trustees of an institution for children which had been founded and well endowed by a member of their own communion, who declared his wish that it should be unsectarian. "We

84 The Place and Function of the

tried to keep it so," they said, "and so we divided our sixty or more children into three classes, and sent one class to such a Sunday-school, a second class to such a Sunday-school, and the third to one of your Sunday-schools. And we had ministers of different kinds for Sunday services. But we soon found that this was really teaching sectarianism. And when we were making some changes, we decided to have only one kind of religion. We examined our three classes and found that while those who had been to other Sunday-schools knew most about the names of the rivers and the mountains and the kings, those who had been to the Episcopal Sunday-school knew most about the real Gospel. And so we ask you to take the institution under your spiritual charge."

To use the Catechism rightly, we must make it the thread on which to string, and to keep in their proper order, the pearls and jewels of Scripture truth. We do want the children to know the stories of the old-time saints and patriarchs, and to know them well, but we do not want them to learn and know them as mere history ; rather as helping to understand better their own relation and bless-

ing in Christ. How the Catechism opens the way for such grand and wise teaching! Take the first of its five great divisions which, though it does not use the word, has covenant relation with God as its subject. How much better the child would understand it, how much divine light it would bring into and out of the Old Testament stories, if the enthusiastic teacher, with his or her own mind enriched by Bible study, should help the child to know well the story of the covenant with Noah, and the covenant with Abraham, and with Moses, and then of the new and better covenant. It would make those old stories rich with direct Christian meaning and warm with personal relation to the mind and soul and life of the learner. It would bring them to the child's mind not as merely interesting stories, but as living parts of Christ's great work.

Take the very first question of the Catechism, "What is your name?" so often omitted as unnecessary, and meaningless. How many stories, both of the Old Testament and the New, could be strung upon that. The names divinely chosen and given, and with divine meaning, each with its own per-

86. The Place and Function of the

sonal life and power and prophecy : Eve, and Noah, and Abram, and Abraham, and Sarai, and Sarah, and Jacob, and Israel, a mine rich with interest in each. And in the New Testament, the name above every name, the blessed name of Jesus, and of John, whom we call the Baptist. How large a part of each personal history is wrapped up and expressed, and could be brought out, in the name. And then to tell the child, and show it in Bible story, how God Himself used and spake the names ; how He called Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel and Abraham and Moses and others, all by name, as one man would speak to another. And how our Lord used names, sometimes lovingly and tenderly, as when He spake the names of Zaccheus and Mary and Martha ; sometimes rebukingly, to Philip, and Thomas and Simon, son of Jonas, and Judas. And then, last of all, and crowning the lesson, the picture of the Good Shepherd, who " calleth His own sheep by name."

Pardon me for seeming to lead you aside from our chief subject ; but my own enthusiasm for the Catechism impels me. There is not a question and answer which could not be so clothed with the liv-

ing flesh and blood of Scripture incident and personality.

When I have urged this, some have asked me: "Would you, then, confine us to Bible and Prayer Book and shut out all else?" And with every year of my experience, I have come to say more and more strongly, "Yes!" Whatever other books the teacher may use in private preparation, I would, for the infant classes, and for the intermediate department, put nothing in the scholars' hands but Bible, Prayer Book and Catechism, and the Hymnal. I have myself written a few Sunday-school books, but I have lived to repent it. I am sure that the multiplication and haphazard use of such books is one of the reasons for our weakness. If, for Bible classes and the like, some few books might perhaps be helpfully used, even they should not be books meant to make study easy; rather those which make study necessary; which compel the scholar to investigate and think. If I could I would absolutely keep away from the scholar's sight the leaflets; those cheap and flimsy and perishable substitutes for Bible and Prayer Book. Their very flimsiness helps to undermine reverence

88 The Place and Function of the

for the holy truths they claim to teach. They may, perhaps, be useful to the teachers, but I am not sure of that. It will, indeed, serve to save the pastor from the immediate labor required when, instead of preparing himself as he would for a sermon, and meeting his teachers face to face and giving them his own personal inspiration for the Sunday's duty, he substitutes the leaflet for his own voice and heart. I would as soon think of preaching sermons prepared by some central committee, or Homilies in earlier English History, as to surrender to such a committee and its wholesale work the blessed right and privilege of giving direct instruction to my Sunday-school helpers, and so bringing my own pastoral personality to bear upon the teachers, and, through them, upon the scholars. I find, and I am confirmed in this by the experience of many earnest pastors, that even the teachers are more and more leaving the honest, real Bible untouched upon the shelf, and substituting for it those easy leaflet makeshifts.

There is another weakness or fault in that method, common to that, and to most of the generally approved series of question books. They are

framed not upon the Catechism, but upon the Church year. That Church year is, indeed, a grand method for the purpose for which it is meant, but that purpose is worship. For that, the wit of man could not devise anything to surpass or to equal that beautiful order which has come down to us through God's overruling hand in the life of His Church. But worship and instruction are not the same, though often blended. The children ought to know and to love the Christian chain of seasons and festivals and fasts. But I am sure there is a better way of teaching them its beauties than by making it the law on which the Sunday-school teaching is built. A few bright words from the teacher about the day, or four or five questions from the pastor, as opening to the united recitation of the whole school, will do it far more effectively, because far more positively. So while the Christian year can grandly help and illustrate, it ought not to take the lead. It brings out some, not all, of the great truths in a historical order. But there is also, and God meant there should be, a logical order of connection and succession in the fulness of the Gospel truth. That

90 The Place and Function of the

logical order is admirably given in the Creed. Reverse the order of its articles or assertions, or take them in irregular, chance order, or drop out two or three of them, and the ideal and unity of the faith is marred. They must come in order, just as they are. Each article seems to grow out of and hang upon what went just before it. Each opens and leads to the truth that immediately follows. And so also the round of the Christian year is a connected and continuous scheme for its own purpose of public worship. To reverse or disarrange its order, to omit any part, would be to mar and destroy the unity and balance for that use.

Unfortunately, schools do have their interruptions and vacations. Our city Sunday-schools, many of them, are closed for two or three months ; and it is even becoming a fashion to close the smaller Sunday-schools of the country during the inclement winter weather, and the time of impassable roads. The Sunday-school, thus interrupted, cannot, when reassembled, take up the thread of holy teaching just where it dropped it. If it keeps to the order of the Calendar, it must skip the lessons for all those Sundays of vacation, with the

loss of all the important truths assigned to them. But the logical order of the Catechism is not marred by such interruptions. On re-assembling, the order of teaching can be taken up just where it was stopped.

Still another objector urges that to keep the scholars to long continued round of the Catechism would be very monotonous and dreary to them ; that they would want more variety. More variety than in the Church Catechism ? Why, it includes the whole vast sweep of truth revealed from the creation, yes, from the eternity of Godhead before it, to the day of judgment, and all the eternity of glory which shall follow it ! And, with wondrous beauty of variety in history, in incident, in personal example and illustration in Psalms, in divine utterances, in every incident in the life of our Lord, in parable, in miracle, in apostolic action, the whole vast volume of the variety of Holy Scripture may be brought to brighten it. It may be made monotonous and dry, if those who teach only hear recitations, if there are only a few set questions and answers upon each question of the Catechism. I can imagine such dryness, and I confess I have often

92 The Place and Function of the

seen it. But I can imagine, and I have known, a study of the Catechism without such mechanical dryness; planned with such fulness that it would require two years, or even three, to complete, and with such varied interweaving of harmonious Scripture study that it was always fresh and new.

The fundamental principles and rules and forms in any science or branch of learning are, of necessity, dry if one never gets beyond them to their application. It is very dry work for a young child to be drilled in the multiplication table, but without it one could never reach the beauties of advanced mathematics and astronomic science. It is very dry work for the young student to commit, by long, weary, mechanical repetition, the conjugations and declensions of the Greek verbs and nouns, but there comes a time when, out of such beginning, and built upon it and constantly using it, there grows the enjoyment of the whole wealth of Greek literature, its histories, its oratory, its epics, its dramas. And the most advanced Greek scholar will go back to his grammar and find in it beauties which his earlier studies failed to see. It is monotonous for the student of music, with aching fingers, to practice

the scales till they seem never to end, but how skilfully the wise teacher, while never letting that foundation lose its firmness, leads the pupil on into all the enjoyment of the highest harmonies. And the most skilful performer keeps up the skilfulness by continually keeping up the familiarity with those first elements. Just as that early drill was the skeleton which was to be clothed with the flesh and blood of living music, so the Catechism is the skeleton on which is to be built up the living body of Bible knowledge.

But it is time, now, that we speak about the work or function of the highest department, that of the Bible classes. Highest in order of time and progression; but, in importance and result, not higher than those which went before. And here, too, I would say, "Beware of books. Of making many books," in this direction, "there is no end." And if I could have my way, I would, even for the Bible classes, limit the scholars to Bible and Prayer Book; but a really good copy of each. Cheap, common books help to cheap and common thought. You can buy pamphlet editions of Shakespeare or Scott for fifteen or twenty cents, in fine,

94 The Place and Function of the

crowded type, but you know with what greater satisfaction and appreciation and better effect you read the same words from a well-bound volume, with its clear, fair page and the large, open type. I contrasted, recently, my first used, compact edition of Butler's Analogy (where the crowded print seemed to condense more compactly still the close, crowded thought) with the magnificent edition of the same by Gladstone, where the open arrangement, the clear print and fair page made what had been hard, easy, and what was obscure, became clear.

I have seen full and carefully prepared books of set questions and answers, meant for Bible classes, the answers to be learned by memory and recited. But whether upon the Bible as a whole, or upon special books, the method is wrong. It substitutes memory for thought. It does the work for the scholars which the scholars ought to do for themselves. If, for example, you ask, "When is Abraham called the friend of God; and why?" and then print the answer, it is not learned so effectively, as if the scholar had only the question and were to bring the answer as fruit of his own study. And

those in the Bible classes have reached an age where they may be required to do some thinking for themselves. And any teacher who has the real teaching faculty and love will find such books fetters on his own mental action. They will make work poorer for both scholar and teacher. Again, most Bible questions on books, or leaflets, or teachers' helps, are unhelpful and harmful by reason of the multitude of the questions and their flimsiness. Take as an example some questions on the Parable of the Husbandmen and the Vineyard, which were published in the *Sunday School Magazine*: "Who spake by parables? What is a husbandman? What is a vineyard? What is ingratitude? What is covetousness?" And then, for still older scholars, "Who was referred to as the householder? Who were the husbandmen? Who was the son of the householder? What is meant by the coming of the Lord of the vineyard?"

And to these commonplace questions, which ought to be left to the teacher's running comment, the answers are printed in full, ready made for mere recitation. It is the merest surface teaching. Better, far better, to make those older scholars read

96 The Place and Function of the

over the parable several times, thoughtfully, to be prepared to tell the story well in their own way, and to expect some questioning, giving them beforehand only some three or four good questions touching its inner meaning, rather than its outer incidents, questions which will really make them think and search.

I may be told that I am making out a method which is beyond the power of a great many teachers. Or, to put it in another form, there are a great many teachers who are below the level of what ought to be the standard of true work. And the answer is, instead of having a great many teachers, have only a few, but be sure they are well qualified. And with the very best, I would have my standard always a little above them. If a teacher ever reaches the ideal, raise the mark a little higher.

And my second answer is that the best teachers will need assistance. But it would not be the machine assistance of the leaflet and the magazine. It should be the living assistance of the living pastor. His personality will help and quicken the teacher's personality. The pastor should meet his teachers to help them, and attendance on his teach-

ings should be absolutely required. I have found, in my own practice, that once a month, for a session of two hours, was better than the weekly meeting with shorter time. Let him leave detail, incident, definition, minute questioning, to the teachers, and let him prepare, for a while at least, the three or four strong questions, and be sure there is really strong meat in them. Show them how to get that strong meat, and make them see that unless the scholars do really lay hold of the heart or spiritual purpose of the lesson, all accuracy of word and definition and incident will do very little good.

You may remember how strongly I urged the necessity of the pastor's influence and watchfulness in the earlier general department of the school. For all the reasons then given, it is as important for the Bible classes, and for one even greater reason; it is because here there is greater danger.

The sad mistake is sometimes made of finding a man or a woman, devout and studious; and, assuming that these qualities assure a safe and good Bible teacher, to commit to such an one a class of young persons just at the age when the spirit of

98 The Place and Function of the

inquiry and doubt is keenest, and leave the teachers, without careful pastoral guidance, to choose their own methods and push their own ideas. So long as they are kept close to the guarded standards of Holy truth in the Creed and Catechism, there is some safeguard. But both teachers and scholars in the Bible classes are tempted to feel that they have got beyond those limits, and that the whole range of Bible incident and history and prophecy and parable, and miracle and mystery, is open before them for unfettered, free speculation. And here there is danger that instead of truth there may be taught the wildest fancies and theories and heresies. There is, I know, a popular idea that one cannot err in reading the Bible; that it is too clear to be misunderstood. But when we remember how many of the errors of mad fanaticism have grown out of the crude interpretations of Holy Writ, made by unbalanced minds, we cannot wonder that an inspired apostle should earnestly warn us that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." In Bible class teaching, it is absolutely necessary that the teacher must be taught. It too often hap-

pens, as St. Paul found it, when he said to some, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one should teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." So even the Bible class teacher needs the Catechism. They had once learned them, but, like some in our day, they needed to be brought back to them; any teaching, however bright or progressive or popular, that is not soundly built on those "first principles" will be unsafe. The pastor must make sure not only that the teachers have once mastered those wonderful statements of the Creed and Catechism, but that those statements have really been wrought into the mind and soul of the teachers. Without this, the very brilliancy and acuteness of the teacher will only be added power for leading astray. Better, far better, one grandly qualified and safe Bible teacher for fifty scholars, than five smaller classes with five smaller teachers, who, instead of conveying in strong, positive form the unquestioned realities of Gospel truth, and "building them in the most holy faith," may be shaking the faith of their pupils and instilling doubts, by ventilating their own uncertainties as to the very reality of

100 The Place and Function of the

miracles and all the supernatural facts of Holy Scripture. The careful pastor will not even leave his teachers to choose their own Bible commentaries for themselves. There are many good medicines, but a true physician will know his patient before he prescribes. There can hardly be any form of Sunday-school teaching with more power for good than Bible class work, and hardly any with more possibility for doing harm.

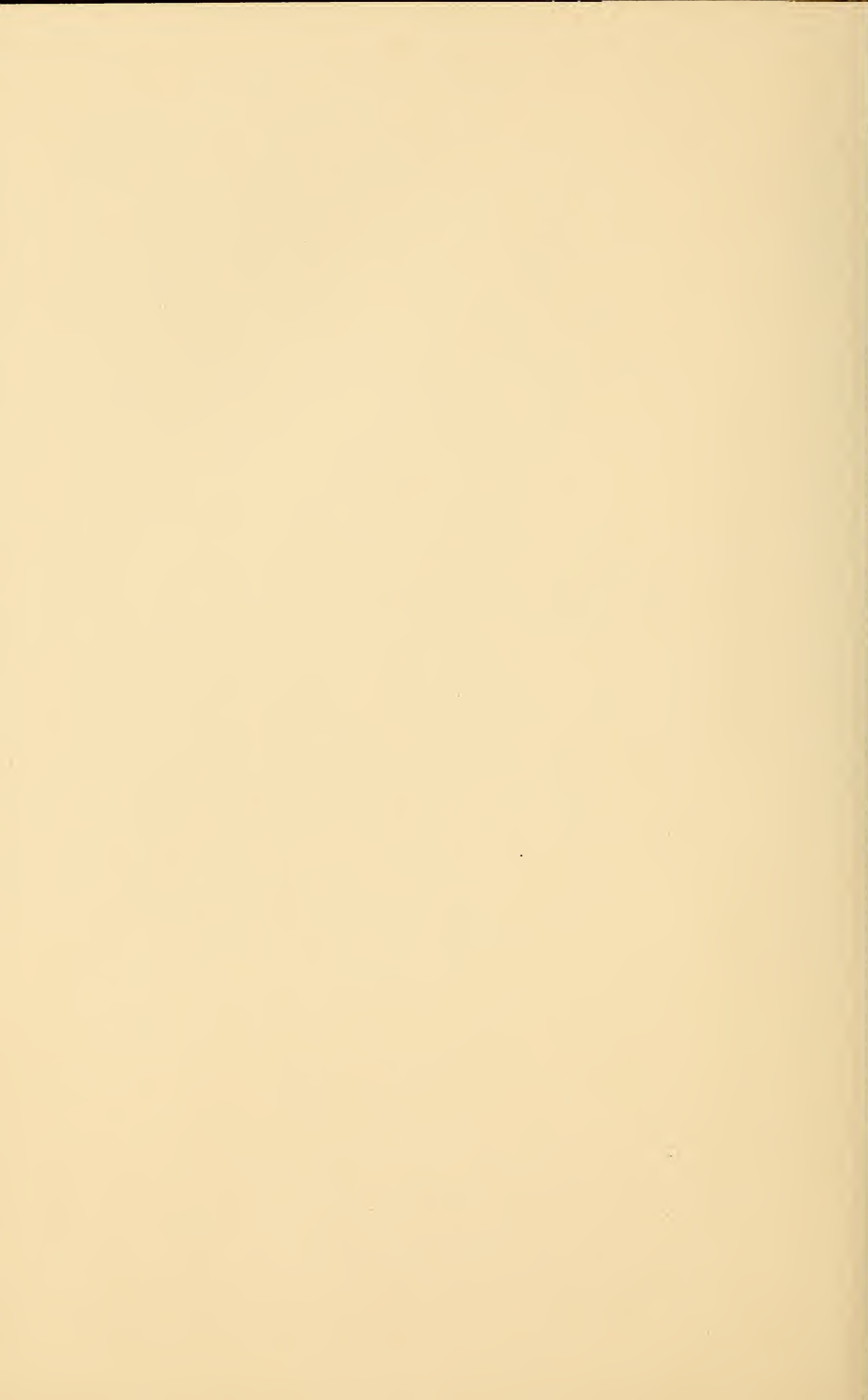
Let us now come back from these closer studies to a wider view of our great subject. You will say that I have set before you a very exacting standard. I know I have, and I meant to do so. All ideals, to be helpful, must be very high indeed. Some may say it is impracticable. I do not think so. There is not one suggestion I have made which is not within the reach of possibility and earnest effort. And I have spoken very earnestly because I am fully convinced that, under God, the hope for the Church in the future is in the children, and that the Christian training of the children is one of the first and weightiest parts of pastoral duty and responsibility; that the pastor's and teachers' work is to be as much in the

Sunday-school as in the pulpit. The way for raising our Sunday-school to greater efficiency is to raise the quality of the teaching, and, for that, we must raise the quality of the teachers. I have been told that such ideas as I have tried to give would discourage and drive away half of our great army of teachers. And I can only say that I would be glad if it would keep out all who take any lower ideal of the sacredness and responsibility of the work. I would like to put to each one God's own question: "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

In the great matter of bringing the Sunday-schools to do their full, true work, the greatest problem that faces us is in weeding out weak and unhelpful teachers and providing some way in which those in earnest can be thoroughly trained for their work. The Church is now beginning to study that problem. May our Lord bless and help us in that study, and show us how, far better than ever before, to do His work for the children's souls that are so dear to Him.









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